

Appl. No. 09/941,500  
Amd. Dated December 16, 2004  
Reply to Office Action of 10/19/2004

**Amendments to the Claims:**

1-54 (canceled)

55. (currently amended) A disengageable connector, for vertically and horizontally interconnecting two individual flooring panels to form a permanent or temporary laminate flooring surface on top of a support structure wherein each of the flooring panels include a top wear surface, a substrate material, and a bottom surface for contact with the support structure, each flooring panel also includes a plurality of identical edges having a recess formed therein and at least one channel formed in the bottom surface thereof, the connector comprising;

a base having a given width and lying within a base plane, the base having a projection extending vertically from the base to a first height, the projection having top and bottom portions and consisting of identical right and left halves for insertion into the respective recesses along the edges of two flooring panels to be connected, the top portion of each half comprising identical extensions extending horizontally in opposite directions equal distances wherein the combined width of the extensions is less than the width of the base, the extensions include at least one angled portion obliquely sloped in relation to a longitudinal axis of the base, and two protrusions extending vertically from the base for insertion within respective channels formed in the bottom surface of the flooring panels, the two protrusions extend vertically from the base to a second height which is substantially smaller than the first height, the protrusions spaced apart from the projection and being located on either side of the projection beyond a lateral extent of the extensions, wherein each of the protrusions includes first and second tapered surfaces extending outwardly from a top portion of the

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protrusion, the first tapered surface facing away from the projection and extending at an oblique first angle relative to the base plane and the second tapered surface facing the projection and extending at an oblique second angle relative to the base plane, wherein the first angle is less than the second angle.

56. (previously presented) The connector according to claim 55, wherein the connector is an elongated track.

57. (previously presented) The connector according to claim 55, wherein the projection extends substantially the entire length of the connector.

58. (previously presented) The connector according to claim 55, wherein the protrusions extend substantially the entire length of the connector.

59-62. (canceled)

63. (withdrawn) The connector according to claim 55, wherein the base further includes at least one recess formed between the projection and the two protrusions.

64-67. (canceled)

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68. (currently amended) A disengageable connector for interconnecting two individual planar panels to form a surface on top of a support structure, wherein each of the panels include a top wear surface, a substrate material, and a bottom surface for contact with the support structure, each panel also includes a plurality of identical edges having a recess formed therein and at least one channel formed in the bottom surface thereof, the connector comprising;

a base lying within a base plane and having a projection extending vertically from the base to a first height;

the projection having top and bottom portions and including identical right and left halves for insertion into the respective recesses along the edges of two panels to be connected, the top portion of each of the right and left halves comprising identical extensions extending horizontally in opposite directions; and

two protrusions extending vertically from the base for insertion within respective channels formed in the bottom surface of the flooring panels, the two protrusions extend vertically from the base to a second height which is substantially smaller than the first height, the protrusions spaced apart from the projection and being located on opposite sides of the projection, and, wherein each of the protrusions includes first and second tapered surfaces extending outwardly from a top portion of the protrusion, the first tapered surface facing away from the projection and extending at an oblique first angle relative to the base plane and the second tapered surface facing the projection and extending at an oblique second angle relative to the base plane, wherein the first angle is less than the second angle.

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69. (canceled)

70. (withdrawn) A disengageable connector for interconnecting two individual planar panels to form a surface on top of a support structure, wherein each of the panels include a top wear surface, a substrate material, and a bottom surface for contact with the support structure, each panel also includes a plurality of identical edges having a recess formed therein and at least one channel formed in the bottom surface thereof, the connector comprising;  
a base lying within a base plane having a projection extending vertically from the base to a first height;

the projection having top and bottom portions and including identical right and left halves for insertion into the respective recesses along the edges of two panels to be connected, the top portion of each of the right and left halves comprising identical extensions extending horizontally in opposite directions; and

first and second protrusions extending vertically from the base for insertion within respective channels formed in the bottom surface of the flooring panels, the two protrusions extend vertically from the base to a second height which is substantially smaller than the first height, the first and second protrusions spaced apart from the projection and being located on opposite sides of the projection, wherein the base further includes a substantially flat surface extending between the projection and the first and second protrusion, the flat surface being interrupted by at least one recess formed between the projection and at least one of the first and second protrusions.

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71. (withdrawn) The connector according to claim 70, wherein the base includes first and second recesses respectively formed between the projection and the first and second protrusions.

72. (withdrawn) The connector according to claim 70, wherein each of the protrusions further includes a tapered surface.

73. (withdrawn) The connector according to claim 72, wherein each of the protrusions includes tapered surfaces extending outwardly from a top portion of the protrusion.

74. (currently amended) A disengageable connector for interconnecting two individual planar panels to form a surface on top of a support structure, wherein each of the panels include a top wear surface, a substrate material, and a bottom surface for contact with the support structure, each panel also includes a plurality of identical edges having a recess formed therein and at least one channel formed in the bottom surface thereof, comprising;

a base having a given width and lying within a base plane, the base having a projection extending vertically from the base to a first height;

the projection having top and bottom portions and including identical right and left halves for insertion into the respective recesses along the edges of two panels to be connected, the top portion of each of the right and left halves comprising identical extensions extending horizontally in opposite directions equal distances wherein the combined width of the extensions is less than the width of the base, the extensions include at least one angled portion obliquely sloped in relation to a

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longitudinal axis of the base; and

two protrusions extending vertically from the base for insertion within respective channels formed in the bottom surface of the flooring panels, the two protrusions extend vertically from the base to a second height which is substantially smaller than the first height, the protrusions spaced apart from the projection and being located on opposite sides of the projection beyond a lateral extent of the extensions, wherein each of the protrusions includes first and second tapered surfaces extending outwardly from a top portion of the protrusion, the first tapered surface facing away from the projection and extending at an oblique first angle relative to the base plane and the second tapered surface facing the projection and extending at an oblique second angle relative to the base plane, wherein the first angle is less than the second angle.

75. (previously presented) The connector according to claim 74, wherein the connector is an elongated track.

76. (previously presented) The connector according to claim 74, wherein the projection extends substantially the entire length of the connector.

77. (previously presented) The connector according to claim 74, wherein the protrusions extend substantially the entire length of the connector.

78. (withdrawn) The connector according to claim 74, wherein the base further includes at least

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one recess formed between the projection and the two protrusions.

79-82. (canceled)